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IS TELEPATHY, OR PSYCHIC TRANSMISSION, A FACT OR A DELUSION?

BY JOHN D. QUACKENBOS, M.D.

It is commonly admitted that in the realm of psychic research we are only at the threshold of discovery—that the coming century will disclose wonders far beyond any yet disclosed. The scientific investigation of spirit, the nature of which has for so long been discussed only from religious and metaphysical viewpoints, is now regarded by advanced thinkers not only as practicable, but, in the face of a steadily growing interest, as imperative. Transcendental experiences are no longer looked upon as hallucinations. Ultra-normal faculty is believed to be everywhere inherent in the human personality; and we are to look for new expressions of it along many lines, notably those of telepathy and spiritual intercommunication. In its broadest sense, telepathy, the action of spirit at a distance, implies a potential mental or psychic intercourse between human beings in or out of the body. Of such communication with the dead—of incarnate spirits with discarnate friends through the machinery of the séance—there is as yet no convincing evidence. And still the telepathic faculty is believed by leaders of science to be in actual course of development among men, to be evolutionary, and even to be cosmic—that is, to extend out into the universe wherever there may be telepathically responsive sentient beings to receive transmitted vibrations. Percipient agents on this planet may in turn be reciprocally impressed from the transcendental world through the medium of similar vibrations conveying thought, feeling, sympathy, admonition, inspiration. Distance implies no barrier to communication between subliminal selfs.

Telepathic action is characteristic of animal nature and

explains certain methods of brute communication. Birds and beasts receive information through the medium of earth vibrations. Certain game birds and animals are sensitive to the faintest earth tremor, and are approached only by the hunter who steps slowly and carefully without jarring the surface of the ground. The nature of the vibrations also conveys a notion of the direction from which the danger is coming, and wild game depend as much on their apprehension of this as upon detection by the ear. When it comes to cosmic vibrations, the subtle movements communicated to the earth's crust by the tides or the pull of heavenly bodies, animals, especially the *feræ naturæ*, are mysteriously affected as to appetite, sleep, nervous poise, and possibly procreation and migration.

Recent experiments have proved moths and other insects to be capable of thought transference so far-reaching as to impress their fellows miles away with a knowledge of their whereabouts. It is well known to whalers that a cetacean struck by a harpoon has power instantly to convey intelligence of the presence of an enemy to a spouting school a half-mile distant, so that the individuals composing it immediately disappear below the surface. Every angler is aware that if one trout in a pool has caught a glimpse of him all are instantly apprised of his presence, so that his most attractive lures are offered in vain. What one knows, all know at the same moment through an interchange of subconscious states. Aristotle noticed that the female partridge is affected by a distant male bird through what he described as a breeze from the cock's direction.

Some twenty years ago, the late Austin Corbin purchased twenty-five thousand acres of farm and wood land in New Hampshire and stocked the estate, known as Blue Mountain Park, with elk and deer. In 1897 it was predicted that the extinct carnivores, whose natural food is venison, would return to the region. Not long after, the presence of pumas, or mountain lions, was reported in the park and vicinity, and the black bear, lynx, and wild-cat are conspicuously in evidence to-day. By what mysterious power of cognition did the great cat, a century vanished from this region, become aware of the presence of deer in Blue Mountain Park if not through the exercise of telepathic action—the unconscious radiation of subtle waves, perhaps of fear for their traditional enemies, from the community of four thousand

animals of the deer tribe to fugitive panthers in the Alleghanies or in remote areas of the Green and Adirondack mountains? Strange to relate, the presence of this large body of *cervidae* has attracted to the surrounding country numbers of Virginia deer and other animals, like the otter, long extinct. None of these creatures manifest their usual fear of man; a sense of security seems to pervade the whole community of new-comers. A family of otters, for instance, during the summer of 1906 made their home under the boat-house of a friend at Lake Sunapee. Mink often play among the chairs on the writer's piazza. Beavers, forgetful of man, fell trees and construct dams on secluded streams. Deer parade the roads and pastures with none of their natural shyness—as if nerve waves undulating from the community in Corbin Park, conveying ideas of safety through some elastic cosmic medium, set in vibration the sensitive nerve extremities of the recipient wild fauna in such a way as to be translated into the massive feeling of security indwelling in the unconscious transmitters. Numberless instances of such spiritual intercommunication between animals themselves and between animals and men are on record. Much has been written in the publications of psychic research societies regarding these perceptions of brutes, suggesting a more intimate relationship between members of the animal kingdom than has hitherto been understood, besides the existence among the lower animals of supernormal psychic faculties (like precognition, instincts of direction, and so forth) that may be elicited in man by suggestion in hypnosis.

If brutes possess this inscrutable telepathic power of communication and exercise it for their benefit, it cannot seem marvelous that it exists among human beings.

For ages, barbarous peoples of both hemispheres have availed themselves of this supernormal faculty of transmitting information and acquiring knowledge. Polynesian, Australian, African, and American Indian medicine-men and scryers still gaze into crystals, "sight-stones," and polished slabs, or stare into water and drops of blood, in order to bring within range intuitive knowledge existing in the subconsciousness, or to see telepathically visions of events occurring at a distance and unknown to the seer. Telepathic conveyance is the only explanation of accurate information given to a friend of the writer's more than

forty years ago, by a Chinaman, concerning the loss of one of his ships eight hundred miles away, afterward verified to the letter as to time, place, and detail. When asked how he knew of the disaster, the Chinese percipient said that when he desired news he went into a certain dark room in Canton and sat down. If there was any important action occurring, it was communicated to his mind by agents stationed at distant points. British officers are authority for the statement that during the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 information regarding the uprising was received by natives in advance of the time required to transmit news by the conventional channels. Similar telepathic sensitiveness on the part of negro seers has been noted by English observers in explanation of the transmission of knowledge by unknown means in different parts of Africa.

Psychology admits the possibility of such harmonious correspondence in articulating the principle that "different consciousnesses or different aggregates of states of consciousness may combine and interpenetrate." The Church teaches soul intercourse in its doctrine of the Communion of Saints—that all the members of the Church visible are mystically united in Christ with one another and with the members of the Church invisible, having spiritual fellowship in common. But this does not imply the possibility of conscious communication with the dead, although it unites all beings incarnate and discarnate in what Professor Myers called "a splendid universe of moral and intellectual life."

According to Professor James, the psychological condition of our being touched by spiritual agencies consists in our possession of a subconscious region, in our privilege of admission to an invisible and unknown world, which alone yields access to them. In sleep life, in hypnosis, the door is always ajar, sometimes wide open. Such is the present theory of telepathic interaction, which is held to be a property of the essence of all minds, even of the spirit of the brute which goeth downward.

The experiments of the writer have been confined to an investigation of the transmission of perception, thought, and control through terrestrial space, to a study of the process by which one mind affects another at a distance. In a series of ten thousand experiences with hypnotized patients (that is, patients put to sleep—natural sleep artificially induced), he has realized a responsiveness, on the

part of as many personalities as have been brought into *rapport*, to appeals unheard by the objective ear—appeals spontaneously to project and exploit inherent healing-power, intellectual endowment, ethico-spiritual force.

The fact that minds brought into hypnotic or sleeping contact through the approximation of the physical bodies they tenant, can exchange feelings, ideas, knowledge, convictions, aspirations, suggests the possibility that minds temporarily separated and to all purposes discarnate in natural sleep or in hypnosis—minds thus at liberty to traverse the world and its purlieus—may throw themselves into one another's thoughts, may communicate without reference to space limitations or the trammels and constraints of matter, to be mutually impressed, exalted, and energized. Were the means of establishing such communication comprehended and under control, absent treatment for certain sicknesses and states would be possible and in every way scientific. Now, while we have to admit that the laws of telepathic transmission are unknown, and that telepathy so extensively advertised for the cure of disease has no commercial value, recent experiments of the author incontestably prove that it does exist among human beings, that it is a fact of nature as certain, to quote Flammarion, as the existence of Paris, of oxygen, or of the dog-star—a long unrecognized faculty whose scope, while undreamed of, yet stamps it as *facile princeps* among what Emerson designates as “the immense possibilities of man.”

That there is in each one of us an inner immaterial being not under constraint to obey conditions imposed by our physical organisms, but capable of perceiving and acting by means peculiarly its own, is known to psychologists. A perishable body is not indispensable to the life and action of this inner being, or spiritual personality, which preserves its own independent existence even in the absence of the physical body. The powers of this personality are often exercised in spite of, rather than by aid of, the material organism. They are of the nature of clairvoyance (space is annulled), prescience (time does not obscure the vision of the future), mind-reading, and allied phenomena—the suspension of physical laws like the spontaneous movement of heavy bodies—and various abnormal physical phenomena in which purposive, human-like intelligence manifests itself as a direct cause. Self-projection along these supernormal

lines is facilitated by the induction of hypnosis. In this state, when the mind is measurably divested of all physical impediments, the inherent faculty of the spirit utters itself more freely. Time and space offer no obstructions, matter is penetrable, perceptive power becomes infinitely sublimed.

In proof, let me recall the case of Anna Fortwanger, the German peasant girl with whom I experimented several years ago and whose wonderful clairvoyant and clairsaudient powers impressed all who were present at the séances. This girl, when hypnotized by a friend and directed to describe different places and doings absolutely unknown both to the subject and hypnotizer, at five separate trials in the presence of reputable witnesses responded with marvelous accuracy. But attempts to cause Anna Fortwanger to impress persons at a distance, impelling to expression or action, or to enter into their thoughts and feelings, were without result.

The case now presented is that of a Belgian woman who possesses power to diagnose diseases at a distance when entranced and commanded to go to a designated patient and describe the bodily conditions. On several occasions, at a distance of miles, she has defined with startling exactness lesions of which she could have known nothing. The twelve-year-old son of Dr. F. N. Brett, lately Professor of Bacteriology in the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Boston, was gifted with X-ray vision so that when hypnotized by his father he could "look right into and through the human body," seeing the internal organs as readily as one would see objects through a window. In dozens of instances this boy located tumors, foreign bodies, bullets in gun-shot wounds, valvular lesions, and so forth. But Leon Brett was always approximated to the patient. It was X-ray vision at short range. The *modus operandi* in the case of my recent subject is as follows:

A physician is present whom we will call Dr. A. The subject, who is not a professional, we will designate as Madame B, and the lady who hypnotizes Madame B (the sister of a New York physician) as Miss C. Madame B is hypnotized, or put into a quasi-cataleptic state, and then directed to go to the patient, look into his body, and describe the nature of his trouble. This she does in detail, pointing out conditions of which Dr. A, Miss C, and her own objective self could not have had the slightest knowl-

edge. In one instance in which I followed her statements through the telephone she diagnosed while five miles away an obscure case in my office and told correctly the cause of the lesion. She assumes the symptoms and sensations she discovers, and on several occasions has suffered acutely for hours from pains and perceptions similar to those of the patient. Her person becomes sensitive in the region in which the subject is affected, so that Dr. A is able to locate, through her sensations, the trouble in a remote patient whom he has never seen. She has stated facts contrary to the preconceptions of those about her, and to the diagnoses of attending physicians, in one case perceiving impending insanity, which so seriously affected her mind that Miss C was obliged to discontinue treatment.

In her trance Madame B sends to the affected person what she calls a "healing current," through the medium of spirally undulating physio-psychic vibrations, which carry the mysterious message. How far her treatment will succeed remains to be seen. I have known sleep to be induced (not a new effect of the projection of psychic force) and sudden permanent improvement to result from her efforts. In a case of cancer of the liver which she diagnosed, she was, naturally, helpless to relieve. She realizes when death is imminent.

Madame B also enters into the mental and emotional states of remote persons and reproduces them in her trance, sometimes retaining an impression and acting it out for hours. She declares that her spirit actually visits the persons and places to which it is directed, reaching them through the medium of etheric vibration; that accentuated perception does not explain her action and passion. At the emphatic command of the operator, when she is commingled with a given subliminal outside the primary consciousness, she can impel that subliminal to influence its earth life, and so bring about a desirable change in mental motions, attitudes of feeling, mistaken beliefs, in the subject under treatment. It will thus be seen that the transfiguring power resides in the patient, and is only awakened and exploited by Madame B. After ministering to a person several times and so becoming psychically acquainted, she can entrance herself and apply treatment without the aid of an intermediary.

But the most wonderful exhibition of her gift is the prac-

tical liberation of her personality from its material organism, and its invasion of the soul of another being to whom it is directed by me, to be in turn bodily usurped by that other person—so that I am enabled, through dynamic suggestions offered to Madame B, to reach the correlated personality and compel in it the action I desire, provided such action be right. Madame B not only feels and acts the part of the person in *rapport*, but she is that person unmistakably, possessed of his knowledge, character traits, feelings, and mental attitudes; he talks through her lips, suffers through her bodily organs, and energizes through her brain. A remote subject is thus brought face to face with me, and I am enabled to effect salutary changes against his objective will and consent by appeal to the commingled subliminal selves. If this unparagoned means of enforced attention results from a spiritual facility that is lasting, then every man and woman in the world is accessible through this channel; susceptible to corraling by this subliminal method of approach; coercible to apprehension of the wrongness of positions, incentives, and motives for action when they are wrong; and changeable to right view and moral action.

No harm can be done. I have seen the controlling personality resent an uncongenial suggestion with profanity and blows. There is no such thing as malign telepathic influence—malicious animal magnetism. The intelligent percipient is brought into adjustment with the law of right, and acts, not because he is constrained by the agent, but because he realizes that the action suggested is wise, necessary, expedient, or ethical. He cannot be impelled to do anything inconsistent with moral principle, nor can he be physically injured through telepathic impressions by those who wish him ill (witchcraft).

Hitherto, in response to many and varied applications for the relief of the willing dupes of delusion and infatuation, of drink and drug habitués, of the pursuers of soul-killing practices, who have obstinately thrust aside the hand reached out to help them, psychology has had no hope to offer. Now, through impression of the subliminal consciousness in the manner described, recovery of common sense, normal relations, and manly states of control may be forced upon them without their objective acquiescence, and even against their very wills. How many intermediaries like Madame B there may be in the world, or how far education

may count in the production of such intermediaries, we can only conjecture.

A peculiar feature of the procedure is the separation from Madame B's personality of a segment which, operating independently through the same organism, talks to me from the standpoint of an onlooker, directs me how to proceed, and even what to suggest to its entranced fellow. It was this segment that bade me treat her as I would treat the distant subject, suggesting through her subliminal mysteriously interblended with that of the subject, and thus pointed the way to what must be regarded as the most important discovery yet made in the field of abnormal psychology. This segment always tells me when to awaken Madame B. On the utterance of my command to emerge from her trance she is thrown into a distressing convulsion, and calls to me through this same alternating segment to mitigate the violence of the spasm. After resuming her objective life, she suffers for a time from confusion and exhaustion.

Madame B does not understand how this is all done; neither does the profoundest philosopher comprehend the transmission of gravity force through space, the means of its conveyance being wholly a matter of speculation. And yet this force governs the destinies of millions of suns and systems. In explanation she constantly refers to vibrations spirally moving. To translate her description into scientific language, these vibrations are of varying amplitudes (heights) and wave-lengths, and, to use her own expression, strike against her inner self like the waves of the sea. She has to be "in a person's vibration" in order to enter into his feelings and apprehend his bodily condition; and she possesses the rare gift of being able to convert supersensuous perceptions into physical values. She knows physically what she perceives psychically, and she perceives without the operation of the recognized sense organs. She speaks of space as being filled with vibrations, spheric waves, undulating *spirally* from every conscious unit or center, just as ether waves are emitted from every portion of matter. (Bozzano explains telepathy as due to an initial physio-psychic vibration which, *expanding concentrically* in all directions, reaches the brain of the percipient, bringing with it the agent's thought.) She has the power to intercept the vibrations that link her to the person she is in search

of. Some she characterizes as harmonious, some as inharmonious. Thus she discovers the quality of thought in the mind with which she is in *rappport*. If at the time it be immoral or vicious, she experiences pain and gives utterance to disapproval in her trance. As each human being has an individuality that distinguishes him from his fellows, no matter how his mental or emotional states may vary, so each person's vibrations are to Madame B different from those of any and all other beings. This explains how she is able to recognize her subject in space. To her, thoughts have a substance; and she sees them in motion, always spiral. She claims to read the future and does predict. But the value of the prescience she may possess is yet undetermined.

Are we on the eve of discovering a much more marvelous application of psychic force which will develop in man a spiritual consciousness, make him superior to all science as at present interpreted, effect that adjustment with natural law which will banish disease and unlock the door to millennial perfection? Let a selected number of persons be empowered to intercept and utilize for purposes of communication the vibrations radiating from personalities they wish to communicate with, and impressions for uplift and general betterment might be given without the objective knowledge or consent. A few thousand well-wishers might in this way bring about a world-wide moral revolution. And, further, the same ill-understood psychic force which, when applied by a limited number of specially gifted individuals, has tipped tables and moved pianos, may possibly, when developed, move houses as well, and literally cast the mountain into the sea (the Greek word *pistis*, in the passage Matthew xvii:20 and Mark xi:23, translated *faith*, implies in its root *such a knowledge of and confidence in certain divine truths as to produce good works*). Faith without such works is a sham.

All this is not to be construed into a defense of absent treatment as commonly and unscientifically practised, where the subjects know that an attempt is making to influence them, and the cures, if effected, are entirely due to auto-suggestion. It implies a psychic level essentially extra-marginal and higher than that of every-day conscious life, and this level is obtained only in hypnosis or in states germane thereto.

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